



JUNE 2009 EDITION

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# Salina Human Relations

“... with liberty and justice for all.”

THE MISSION OF THE SALINA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION IS TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AND TO ESTABLISH EQUALITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL PERSONS WITHIN THE CITY OF SALINA THROUGH CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT, ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION.

## Justice Department sues town in N.C. for discrimination

The U.S. Justice Department announced last month that it had filed suit against the town of Garner, N.C., alleging it violated the federal Fair Housing Act.

The suit stemmed from the city's refusal to allow up to eight men recovering from drug and alcohol addictions to live together as a reasonable accommodation for their disabilities.

Federal law requires that landlords make reasonable accommodation for disabled tenants. For example, if a tenant in a wheelchair needed a ramp to access the property, the landlord would have to allow it, but it would be at the tenant's expense.

The Fair Housing Act defines a handicap as “a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities.”

Federal law prohibits housing discrimination based on a person's race, religion, color, national origin, gender, disability or familial status (number of children, etc.).

## Education center's ESL students get recognition, encouragement

Luci Larson and Dina Girón, both of whom grew up in Spanish-speaking homes, were the first to congratulate a group of 28 students who are on their way to mastering English.

Larson, the mayor of Salina, and Girón, of the Salina Human Relations Department, were the featured speakers at the Salina Adult Education Center's English as a Second Language recognition ceremony on May 26 at Carver Center.

“Let me congratulate you on an accomplishment that I know was not easy,” Girón, a native of El Salvador, told the students, who have roots in Mexico, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Indonesia and Laos. “I know it was worth every minute of your time and every ounce of your energy.”

Larson, who is of Mexican heritage, congratulated the students on their accomplishments and encouraged them to continue their journey of learning.

Many of the students will return for higher-level classes in August, SAEC director Kelly Mobray said.



**ABOVE:** Salina Mayor Luci Larson (left) and Dina Girón of the Salina Human Relations Department (center) congratulate students during the Salina Adult Education Center's English as a Second Language recognition ceremony May 26 at Carver Center.

**RIGHT:** SAEC director Kelly Mobray hands a congratulatory carnation to one of the center's ESL program participants.



# Minorities becoming the majority in many counties around Kansas

By Gina McDonald  
Director, SHRC

*"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny." — Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The newspaper this week revealed that four Kansas counties are minority-majority counties. That means there are fewer non-Hispanic Caucasian people than there are minorities. So, in fact, the majority has become the minority.



Gina McDonald

In the next 20 years, according to the U.S. Census, there will be at least four additional counties achieving that status.

I read in the paper with great

optimism that a woman from one of those counties talked about how well they have all adjusted to the changing population. They are learning from each other. Another man called it a melting pot of cultures.

When I worked in civil rights for people with disabilities, I was amazed at the racism and bigotry I observed by a small minority of people who were fighting for THEIR civil rights. As we fought for accessible busing, there were people from minority groups who thought it was too expensive for disabled people to get on buses. People with disabilities who want their civil rights yet they hate gays.

I wonder what the secret is to getting all of us to understand the quote from Dr. King? If we really lived as Dr. King and other prophets taught us,

what could we achieve?

How very powerful we could be and how powerful we have been when we ALL work together for rights of ALL people.

I wonder what will happen in five to 10 years in those counties where there is a minority majority. Is that the answer? Will it be better? Will people really celebrate diversity and respect each other for who they are and not their religion, race, national origin, disability, creed, age, sex or other factors?

Maybe it is coming sooner than we think. Maybe familiarity will make improvements.

President Obama recently nominated the first Hispanic woman to sit on the Supreme Court. Maybe "the times they are a changing."

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## DID YOU KNOW?



**"The former tenant of a duplex I own abandoned a vehicle on my property. How do I get rid of it without having to pay to have it towed?"**

There is a Salina city code which allows owners to get a vehicle removed from the property at no charge. If you run into this or a similar situation, contact Neighborhood Services at the City of Salina (309-5760). Code officers within the department also can explain how to get replacement car titles, etc., in order to get a new tag for a vehicle.

## Calendar of Events

**June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29:** "Building Relationships with Love and Logic" parenting class, 6-8 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 308 S. Eighth. Presented by Child Advocacy and Parenting Services. Reservations for child care are required and may be made by calling 825-4493.

**June 4:** Tom Wellington of Nicodemus will speak about the Buffalo Soldiers, the Civil War and the issues between Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, 7 p.m., Prescott Room of the Salina Public Library.

**June 7:** Former Salina Arts & Humanities director John Highkin will speak on "The Power of Music" for healing and reconciliation during the Salina Unitarian Universalist Fellowship service, 10:15 a.m., 901 Beatrice.

**June 8/June 25:** American Red Cross babysitter training 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., 145 S. Broadway. Fee: \$25. For more information call 827-3644 or visit the American Red Cross web site at [www.northcentralkansas.redcross.org](http://www.northcentralkansas.redcross.org).

**June 9:** Training for those who would like to establish senior fitness assessments in their own organizations, 8:30 a.m., third floor of the Senior Center, 245 N. Ninth. For more information, call 827-9818 or 483-1859.

**June 9:** Salina Human Relations Commission monthly meeting, 5:30 p.m., Room 105 City-County Building. (Time set aside for public comments).

**June 16/June 20:** American Red Cross CPR & first aid training course, 145 S. Broadway. For more information, call 827-3644 or visit the American Red Cross web site at [www.northcentralkansas.redcross.org](http://www.northcentralkansas.redcross.org).

**June 28:** NAACP-Salina monthly meeting, 3 p.m., Salina Art Center. (Public is invited).

**July 1:** Registration deadline for Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas charity golf tournament, which will be July 17 at Elks Country Club. Fee is \$80 per team. To enter, call 827-5862.

**Aug. 21:** Volunteer Connection's "Connections of the Heart" greeting card premiere and "Art and More" silent auction, 5-7 p.m., Christ Episcopal Cathedral Parish Hall, 138 S. Eighth, 823-3128.

**Sept. 20:** The WIYOS concert, 6 p.m., Roosevelt-Lincoln Auditorium at Pioneer Presidents Place, 220 S. Eighth. Tickets and more information about The WIYOS available at [www.zimkin.com/events](http://www.zimkin.com/events).

## My very educated mother just ... ... received her eviction notice

Remember when you were in grade school, and your teacher taught you how to remember the order of the planets in relation to their distance from the sun?

She probably taught you something like "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pies" to remember Mars, Venus, Earth, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto.

During a presentation last month from the Salina Human Relations Department, members of the Work and Family Studies class at Central High School used a similar method to learn the seven protected classes under the federal Fair



Central High students work on an exercise designed to help them remember the seven protected classes.

Housing Act.

Using the first letter of each class (race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability and family status), teams were asked to come up with a creative sentence. The winner (by class vote) was: "Real Good Dogs Need Real Friendly Companions."

Runner-up: "Red Cats Never Get Red Dog Food."

Students also learned about renters' rights and responsibilities and how to avoid problems when renting an apartment.

Salina Human Relations would like to thank Linda Brown for inviting us to visit her class on May 4.